

families with annual incomes below \$50,000 reported that they had to cut back on grocery spending due to higher gas prices. Among families earning over \$50,000 a year, more than one-quarter reported that they had to cut back on travel, and 15 percent spent less on clothing for their families.

This is real. Gas prices go up, you do not buy as many groceries, you do not buy as many clothes, certainly you do not travel as much or go on vacation.

Rising gas prices translated into the higher prices on consumer goods and services across the board, further squeezing family budgets by ratcheting up the costs of grocery, travel, and countless manufactured goods.

When he was running for office, President Bush, then when he was running as a candidate, promised in 2000 to jawbone OPEC if elected President to keep oil prices down. But there is no evidence he has fought for lower oil prices, and it is clear he has no plan for lower gas prices. The Bush Republican energy bill, which is stalled in Congress, would only increase gas prices, according to the administration's estimates.

The last thing I want to mention before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, is about the debt burden, because I think that ultimately this is the biggest problem that the middle-class faces and the biggest example of the squeeze.

The debt burden is not only the debt that they incur themselves for their household, but also the debt that Republican policies here in Congress are incurring for the Nation, which ultimately have to be paid, primarily by the middle class, because they pay most of the taxes.

Again, America is awash in debt. Typical household debt in 2003 equaled more than 105 percent of disposable income for the average family. That is incredible. I am going to repeat it. Typical household debt last year equaled more than 105 percent of disposable income for the average family.

The government, as I said, has a debt problem too. President Bush's fiscal policies have racked up the largest budget deficit ever, putting an added debt tax on middle-class families. Keep in mind, that debt has to be paid back; and the average worker is paying it back, not the wealthy guy. With interest rates likely to rise, the debt will put an added squeeze on the middle class.

Let me just talk about the various types of debt that we are facing. Housing debt, first of all. The ratio of debt to home equity is at a record high of 45.4 percent. According to the Center For Economic and Policy Research, it has typically been close to 30 percent.

The ratio of debt payments and other financial obligations, like car lease payments and rent, to disposable income is at a record high of nearly one-third for renters. Ten years ago it was just under one quarter, according to the Center For Economic and Policy Research.

□ 2230

Education debt, talked about that already, parents and students are also taking on an increasing level of debt to pay exploding costs since 2001.

Then credit card debt, this is the biggest problem. Every month tens of thousands of unemployed workers are exhausting their unemployment benefits nationwide. Millions more work in jobs that do not pay enough to make ends meet or have not seen their earnings keep pace with inflation. Without a decent paycheck or unemployment assistance, many of these workers take on debt like credit cards to meet their basic needs.

Today the average credit card debt among American households is \$8,000. Credit cards help families cover the gap in earnings when a family person is out of work, but the slow wage growth and long term unemployment makes it difficult to payoff that debt. Essentially that credit card debt that the average person is taking on is the same thing that the Federal Government is doing when they go into debt.

Republican policies are sending the Federal Government's own budget deficit into the stratosphere. The deficit is now estimated at \$5.6 trillion over 10 years, which works out to \$4,392 debt tax per family of four this year. That is how much they are paying, the average family of four is paying to the Federal Government in income taxes. It ends up being used just to pay off the Federal debt.

In a particularly vicious circle the deficit will put pressure on interest rates making it even harder for American families to meet many of their debt obligations and, worse yet, future generations must pay for today's irresponsible fiscal policies. I know that a lot of people do not pay attention to it. But ultimately that is what is going to happen.

Right now short term interest rates are low. Over the long term, because of the Federal deficit and the increase in the deficit that has been incurred by Republican policies, interest rates, long-term interest rates will go up. The majority of this is going to be paid back by middle-class households. So over the long term, the burden on the middle-class, the middle class squeeze from the Federal deficit becomes greater and greater with Republican fiscal policies.

I am not going to get into it all, but obviously, the Democrats have been very critical of this. A few years ago, I remember coming down to the floor when I was first elected back in 1988 and most of the people that were getting up and talking about the problems of the Federal deficit were Republicans.

I specifically remember that there were a group of Republicans that would come down every night in the late 1980s and early 1990s with a clock. The pages would bring out this clock on the floor of the House of Representatives. It practically ran the whole width of the

platform here. It would show how the Federal deficit was going up.

We finally put an end to that on a bipartisan basis frankly in the mid 1990s when we passed the Balanced Budget Act. But ever since President Bush came into office and the Republicans had the majority here, in the House and in the other body, collectively with the President, their fiscal policies have simply run up the debt again.

I wish I could get some of those Republicans now to come down and talk about the Federal deficit. And maybe I will bring out that clock myself one night just to show how the Federal debt continues to rise. But, again, it is not the debt, per se, that bothers me, but the impact on the middle-class.

The average American is going to have to pay back that debt. They are already being squeezed enough with the higher gas prices health care costs, education costs, without having to worry about the increased costs of the debt they are going to have to pay in the future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

9/11 REPRESENTED A DRAMATIC FAILURE OF POLICY AND PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GERLACH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, the American people need to know that the 9/11 terrorist attack on New York and Washington D.C. was not predestined nor was it unavoidable. Unfortunately, the commission investigating 9/11 seems uncomfortable with fixing responsibility, branding such attempts at accountability as the blame game or pointing fingers, or so some of them said, early on in their hearings.

So instead of looking for policies that were dead wrong or people who were incompetent, we have heard about all glitches in the system, about a lack of communication, a lack of a shared database. So expect recommendations from this commission and this task force to be consistent with this thinking. Changes will be suggested in flow charts, organizational restructuring, and, of course, you can expect them to recommend the creation of a new central authority and intelligence czar.

Sorry. 9/11 represented a dramatic failure of policy and people. A number of insane policies led to the creation of the hostile radical Islamic movement we face today. Policies that enabled weird, feudalistic religious zealots to become a major threat to the Western world, and especially to the people of the United States.

Yes, the origins of this frightening reality go back a ways. In the 1980s, for example, the CIA permitted Pakistan to channel America's support to those Afghans who were fighting against the Soviet troops who were occupying their

country. Much of that support that we were giving the Afghan freedom fighters ended up in the hands of Pakistan's favorite Muslim fanatics Golbadin Hekmatyar, a fiend who, in his college days, threw acid in the face of young women who refused to cover themselves totally with a burka.

During the war, I hiked into the Afghanistan, that is the war against the Soviet's occupation of Afghanistan, I hiked into Afghanistan with a small mujahadeen infantry unit. On our way to the south of Jalalabad, which was the last major battle in which Soviet troops fought in that war, we came across an encampment of Saudi volunteers. In stark contrast to the spartan living conditions of the Afghan fighters, this camp site was complete with large safari-style tents, cots and even SUVs. I was told not to speak English because the Saudi crazy man who led this bunch would rather kill Americans than Soviet troops. His name, you guessed it, was Osama bin Laden.

So by the end of the 1980s the presence of a potentially dangerous whack element in Afghanistan was well known. And contrary to leftist cliches, the roots of our current terrorist problem lie not in the support that we gave the Afghan people in their gallant fight against Soviet occupation, but in America's willingness to let Pakistan distribute war supplies and our unconscionable decision after the retreat of the Soviet Army to walk away ourselves and to leave the poor and wounded Afghans to live in the rubble and suffering and to leave them there in their own history.

Milton Bearden, a senior CIA officer who oversaw American support, has suggested that his job was beating the Soviets and that he should not have been expected to keep our weapons and our support out of the hands of those who might pose a long-term threat to the United States. Nonsense. Put this man, the head of the CIA operation overseeing our aid to the mujahadeen, put him, the CIA officer, Milton Bearden, on the list of people who helped bring about 9/11.

I can assure you that complaints were made at the highest level about America's support ending up in the hands of these crazies. I personally made such protests while I was working in the Reagan White House.

Furthermore, it was a policy decision that let Pakistan distribute our supplies and it was wrong. To fix responsibility on this one, I look to the list of senior foreign service officers at our embassy in Islamabad in the 1980s and 1990s. Up to this day, there are State Department geniuses who still tow the Pakistani line, who still seem unable to call Pakistan to task for its transgressions of omission and commission. These State Department pros who ran our policy from Islamabad, Pakistan, in the 1980s and 1990s, these are the ones who also helped give us 9/11. Look at the list of the people who worked there.

Furthermore, it was a policy decision to walk away and abandon our Afghan allies even after psychopathic killers like Golbadin Hekmatyar rose up as the Soviets departed. President Bush, father of our current President, has to accept a lion's share of the blame for this cowardly, arrogant, and selfish policy. There would be no Marshall Plan for Afghanistan nor anything else because, like during the war itself, we left post-war reconstruction and assistance up to the Saudis and up to the Pakistanis, which was, again, another indefensible policy decision. These countries predictably had their own agenda which included the creation of a radical Islamic state in Afghanistan.

The Saudis and the Pakistanis were not upset that the violent extremists were so well armed. The Saudis and the Pakistanis supported the arming of these violent extremists. Predictably, what followed was a period of havoc and bloodshed. Hekmatyar Golbadin peppered Kabul with American rockets that were stockpiled during the Soviet occupation. Well, thank you, Mr. Bearden.

There was a way out of this, of course. We did not need to have our support going to the radicals who hate us and hate our way of life. Instead, there was the king of Afghanistan who had been exiled in Rome for many years he was able and willing to return. King Zahir Shah was, and is, the most beloved man in Afghanistan, a pro-Western force for stability, a moderate Muslim.

Instead, our State Department opted to have the creation of a third force, this new force to be made up of religious fanatics educated in the madrasses, the so-called schools that were in Pakistan, schools that were financed and built by the Saudis but taught nothing but hatred towards the west.

I pleaded with Saudi intelligence chief Prince Turki to at least give the old King Zahir Shah a chance to lead an interim government. No way. Again, our State Department let the Saudis and the Pakistanis take the lead rather than having us lead them. Rather than go with a pro-Western alternative we ended up supporting the Taliban, the creation of the Taliban as a means to bring stability to Afghanistan. And make no mistake about it, the Taliban's ascent to power as well as their ability to stay in power was a Clinton administration policy decision promoted by professionals in our State Department.

Let me just note that I fought that every step of the way, trying to push to get the king of Afghanistan Zahir Shah recognized as a moderate alternative. Unfortunately, once the Taliban came to power, yes, I gave them the benefit of the doubt for about 2 weeks before it was quite evident that our worst fears would be recognized and would come to reality under the Taliban.

Again, who to put on the list of those who blame for 9/11? The policy of the

State Department and the Clinton administration in collusion with the Saudis and the Pakistanis to create and support the Taliban control of Afghanistan, there is a huge cause of 9/11. They obviously did not learn, the Saudis and the Pakistanis and our own people, did not learn a thing from the horror that they created by backing Islamic fanatics like Hekmatyar Golbadin, and instead, went with the Taliban over the moderate alternative of the king.

Of course, our government's support for the Taliban was never publicly acknowledged. But for those of us engaged in that region, and there are darn few of us that were engaged in that region after the Soviets left, it was clear what our policy was.

But what is more poignant is the Afghan system believed the Americans were behind the Taliban. Why should they not? Our aid was channeled disproportionately through the Taliban controlled areas. I remember trying to clear the way for a shipment, private shipment of humanitarian relief for a non-Taliban area in northern Afghanistan only to be blocked by assistant Secretary of State Rick Inderfurth.

If there was any doubt about my suspicions, they were laid to rest and my suspicions were confirmed in 1997 when high level executives from the Clinton administration saved the Taliban from total defeat and extinction. This is long after it was clear what type of regime the Taliban had, the Nazi-like fanatics that they were.

What happened was this: In April of 1997 the Taliban launched a major offensive aimed at taking control over the northern third of Afghanistan, which to that point had remained free and under the control of regional leaders who were commonly referred to as warlords.

□ 2245

One of those regional leaders, General Malick, tricked the Taliban and managed to capture almost all of their frontline troops, along with most of their heavy weaponry. It was an utter disaster for the Taliban. The road to the capital, Kabul, was wide open. The Taliban were totally vulnerable and could have easily been wiped out.

I sent a message to Commander Masood and to others that Kabul should be liberated and that the King should be brought back to oversee a transition government, which then would hopefully evolve into a democratically elected government, perhaps like what happened in Spain where the King returned and it evolved into a democratic government; but before the anti-Taliban forces could strike, Assistant Secretary of State Rick Inderfurth and American U.N. Ambassador Bill Richardson flew to northern Afghanistan and convinced the anti-Taliban leadership that this was not the time for an offensive. Instead, they insisted this was the time for a ceasefire and an arms embargo.

This clearly was a statement of U.S. policy. Two top foreign policy leaders in the Clinton administration flew to northern Afghanistan to convince the anti-Taliban forces not to take advantage of their one opportunity to soundly defeat and, thus eliminate, this enemy.

These Clinton appointees saved the Taliban; and let me underscore, by this time the evil nature of these Islamic Nazis was clearly evident. Right after the cease-fire and the release of prisoners brokered by these Clinton administration geniuses, the Pakistanis began a Berlin-like airlift to resupply and re-equip the Taliban, obviously financed with Saudi money. If I knew of this massive resupply effort, certainly the Clinton administration officials who had set up this scenario knew about it.

So why were the anti-Taliban leaders not notified of this situation? Why did we continue an arms embargo on the anti-Taliban forces, even as the Taliban were rearmed and resupplied? Well, the answer is it was U.S. policy.

So add Clinton appointees Assistant Secretary of State Rick Indefurth and United Nations Ambassador Bill Richardson on the 9/11 blame list, and I say that with great hesitation because Bill Richardson is a friend, and I enjoyed serving with him in this House; but this particular action did great damage to the United States of America's security and, as I say, led to 9/11.

To be fair, they were obviously carrying out the policies that were made elsewhere and approved higher up in the administration, but how much higher can we go than the Assistant Secretary of State for the region and our United Nations ambassador? Well, I can tell my colleagues, it goes all the way up.

Last year, the current foreign minister of Pakistan visited California. Furious by my repeated accusations that Pakistan was responsible for the Taliban, the current foreign minister of Pakistan blurted out, and this was a well-attended event, that America was part of the Taliban deal from the first day it was created. I have been trying to prove that. I have been trying to prove the Clinton administration was covertly supporting the Taliban for a long time. Now, at last, I had confirmation by a nationally and internationally respected leader.

As a member of the Committee on International Relations, I have had the responsibility of overseeing such policy. During the last 2 years of the Clinton administration, I made numerous requests with the support of committee chairman Ben Gilman for Taliban-related documents. I wanted to find out what the genesis of our policy toward the Taliban was and try to expose exactly what our policy was. I asked for the cables, for talking points, meeting notes. This was part of my responsibility, as someone who is a senior member of the Committee on International Relations, to oversee the foreign policy of the United States.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made a commitment to me in an open congressional hearing to provide my office and Chairman Gilman with all the related documents concerning our policy toward the Taliban. Well, to make a long story short, years went by and we kept asking for them. We were stonewalled. They sent us meaningless documents that included innocuous news clippings. Well, this was about as arrogant as anything I had ever experienced as a Member of Congress, and it still is: unelected State Department careerists dismissing the request of elected officials for security-related information. One wonders if the current independent commission examining 9/11 has asked to see these documents.

Is it not important for us to know if our government policy actually helped create the Taliban and protected the Taliban in power, even as they used Afghanistan as a terrorist base, which eventually was used as a staging area for an attack that cost the lives of 3,000 Americans on 9/11? In some ways, it is hard to characterize the administration's support for the Taliban as covert. Anyone looking closely would have to assume that that is what it was; but over and over again we were told this was not the policy. Yet something stunk.

Covert or overt, it was a disgraceful policy, and that policy led to 9/11 by creating a base of operations for bin Laden and a training base and staging area for al Qaeda. By the way, what we know now is bin Laden is not just some voice in the wilderness. He is from an enormously wealthy Saudi family; and while our petroleum dollars flowed into Saudi Arabia over the years, by the hundreds of billions of dollars, the Saudi establishment not only turned a blind eye but also attempted to buy off this violent, anti-Western, Islamic fringe which included bin Laden. This fringe was in their country. They spent billions of our petrol dollars to try to buy off these radicals. So billions of our petrol dollars now have come back to bite us in a big way. It obviously continues to this very day.

The first Gulf War in 1990 did nothing but expand bin Laden's hatred for us. Our presence in Saudi Arabia, he has piously proclaimed, is an insult to his faith. Well, considering that the mass slaughter of unarmed people is perfectly consistent with his faith, perhaps we should quit taking seriously all of this self-righteous, Islamic rhetoric used by bearded, psychopathic killers. Most people who believe in Islam are total opponents to this type of murderous behavior in the name of their religion. It is our job to reach out to those people, those Muslims, those moderate Muslims, who want to live in freedom and want everyone to respect each other's faith, to reach out to them and to make them part of our coalition, to make sure that the radical Islam, just like Communism and every other ism that attempted to murder

tens of thousands and hundred of thousands get their way just as we have defeated them in the past.

In the mid-1990s, bin Laden and his cohorts began to set up a terrorist underground army for a war that he intended to wage on America and on the Western democracies. In the mid-1990s, he operated not out of Afghanistan but out of Sudan. America's official position was that bin Laden was a terrorist, and he was on our Most Wanted List. In fact, CIA Director George Tenet declared him America's and the CIA's number one target.

Inexplicably, while designated as such, the CIA's number one target, the self-aggrandizing monster organized, financed, and implemented attacks that caused tens of billions of dollars in damage and the death of thousands of innocent people, not just in the U.S. on 9/11 but worldwide over several years: the World Trade bombing back in 1993; the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia in 1996; embassy attacks in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998; and then an attack on the USS *Cole*. All of these were all organized by bin Laden's monsters and bin Laden's conspirators, a man recognized as the number one target of the CIA. Yet with all of the CIA's money and power and technology and other assets, with a track record like that, knowing what they are capable of, the CIA could not thwart 9/11, nor did they warn us of 9/11.

So, remember, 9/11 was a major operation, planned and carried out by the CIA's number one target, as well as the number one target, as well as hundreds of others, I might add, who had to be involved in this, with millions and millions of dollars being spent on communication over large areas. Yet we were not warned, and it was not thwarted. If this is not incompetence, then what is?

Furthermore, there were mind-boggling missed opportunities to get bin Laden before 9/11. Either intentionally or as a matter of policy or through incompetence, bin Laden was never stopped, even though there were numerous opportunities to stop him. The Government of Sudan, for example, played close attention to bin Laden. That is why he was operating in that country in the early 1990s. I am told they actually cataloged the people to whom he spoke on the phone and the people who came to see him in person.

The former ambassador for the Sudan to the United States, Mahdi Ibrahim Mohamed, told me personally that he had offered our government this terrorist catalog which would have been a silver bullet for the total destruction of bin Laden's terrorist network, al Qaeda. Vanity Fair reports that the Sudanese Government's offer to provide us this information was abruptly turned down by no one else other than Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. That is right, the Secretary of State. Vanity Fair reports that she instructed that no one look at a copy of the material.

It just reconfirms, I might add, what the Sudanese ambassador has told me

personally. So in bold print let us add to the list of those responsible for 9/11 the former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

It should be noted that former President Clinton is denying that he turned down such an offer from the Sudan. Just even last night, I understand, he was being interviewed and denied that he had turned down this offer. Well, it is not unreasonable to assume that the wording of this denial has been crafted so we really do not know what is, and, unfortunately, we have to look at the words very carefully to see if someone's trying to leave us with a false impression without actually telling a lie.

While we are at it, let us add the name Dick Clarke, and look at Dick Clarke. Now, this is a man who got much attention for criticizing George W. Bush when he criticized him before the investigating panel. Clarke was a senior foreign policy official. While all that I have been describing to my colleagues, while all this was taking place, he was a senior policy person in the Clinton administration and even before. He either approved of what was happening, or he did nothing during this period. He either approved it, or he did nothing. Whichever, he is certainly on the 9/11 blame list and has no credibility in blaming President Bush who, as we know, was sworn in as President after the 9/11 plot was well under way, and it was well under way and started and conceived of at a time when Dick Clarke was a senior official in the administration of this previous administration.

So now we have him attacking our President? From the first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993 to the bombing of U.S. military barracks in Saudi Arabia, to the attack on the USS *Cole* and the destruction of our embassies in Africa, the response from the last administration was so tepid, so weak, that the perpetrators thought that we Americans are cowards.

□ 2300

That is why they went ahead with 9-11, which was aimed not just at killing 3,000 Americans. Let us remember this. It is God's gift to us that only 3,000 Americans died at the Pentagon and in those towers in New York. Tens of thousands of people could have died. This we have learned.

And what we have learned is that that plan to kill tens of thousands of Americans moved forward because the response that we had, our government had to these attacks on us before, during the 1990s, made these terrorists think that we were weak and cowardly. And so those we have captured since have told us that it was the weakness of the 1990s that led to the attacks on us and led to the war that we are in today.

By the way, after one attack it is reported that Richard Clarke, who was a White House official at that time, when they were looking for how to retaliate—it is reported that Richard Clarke

insisted that the retaliation take the form of a bombing of a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan, an aspirin factory which had nothing to do with terrorism. Yet that was the target that he insisted that we use as a retaliation to the attack upon us.

This while still helping the Taliban stay in power. Meaning the policy of the administration at the same time was letting the Taliban stay in power, even after we had been attacked. So here we are, we are attacked, but we still have not changed our policy of keeping the Taliban in power. We were still not working with those people who were anti-Taliban in Afghanistan. Something stinks about this whole situation.

Then, in an even more personal incident about bin Laden, which again clarifies whether or not we were doing what we needed to do, in April and May of 1999 America had an incredible opportunity to capture bin Laden. I personally was involved in this one. It is, unfortunately, yet another example of incompetence of those we trusted to protect us from an attack like 9-11.

In April 1999, a long-time friend, who had been deeply involved in the Afghan fight against Soviet occupation contacted me. My friend was, and is, an American. He has impeccable credentials, and he was widely known and admired among the Afghan people. My friend called to tip me that bin Laden was outside of Afghanistan and could be easily captured. I told him I would pass this on and pass on his name and phone numbers to the CIA.

The very next day, I was at a CIA briefing and I passed on my friend's name and phone number; explained his credential and told them we could have bin Laden on a platter. A week passed, I called my friend, and the CIA had not contacted him after a week. So I went back to the agency. This time they were adamant they would contact my friend. There was still a chance to get bin Laden.

Another week passed, and the CIA did not call my friend. So this time I went to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Goss), chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. When he heard my story, he immediately went into action and arranged a meeting for me the next day. That next day, at the appointed time, I went to a somewhat secret and heavily guarded part of this Capitol, where there in a secure room I met with not just the CIA but also a representative of the NSA and the FBI.

There they were, the bin Laden task force. I complained about my friend's vital information being ignored, and they took notes and apologized for those underheads over at the CIA and promised to get it right this time. A week later my friend still had not been contacted.

When I mentioned this to Chairman Goss, he was appalled. The very next day, and I am sure it was based on him reading someone the riot act, a rep-

resentative from an intelligence agency finally called my friend. The caller's tone of voice, my friend says, suggested that it was an obligatory inquiry.

It did not make any difference, because then the trail was cold. It was all very strange and very disheartening to see that the CIA and our intelligence people, and this was back during the last administration, did not seem to want to know how to get bin Laden. Then we end up bombing an aspirin factory after he commits a terrorist act against us.

Clearly, however, there was something dreadfully wrong at the CIA. And over at the FBI, it was just as bad, if not worse. It is widely known now that 2 months before the September 11 attacks, Phoenix FBI agent, Kenneth Williams, sent a memo to the FBI headquarters in Washington and New York warning that bin Laden disciples might be training at U.S. flight schools, and asking for a review to determine if this was happening in other parts of the country. The Williams memo was ignored by David Frasca, the supervisor special agent in Washington. David Frasca.

One month before 9-11, Minnesota FBI agent Colleen Rowley asked FBI headquarters to issue a warrant allowing agents to search the computer of a would-be terrorist, part of a gang, for information regarding Mr. Massaoui, who we knew was linked to the terrorist groups in the United States. She wanted to make sure we could check his computer. The FBI ignored her warnings. The FBI actually prohibited her from telling anybody else.

When she went to the CIA to try to warn them, she was rebuffed for her efforts. There was something terribly wrong with the culture of the FBI when they were upset that one of their people had gone to the CIA to warn them of a terrorist in the United States.

Clinton appointee, Louis Freeh, headed the Bureau for almost 8 years. The new director, Robert Mueller, took over just 2 days before 9-11. The Bureau, obviously, needed a major overhaul, as became painfully evident shortly thereafter when the World Trade Towers crashed to the ground before a shocked Nation.

The FBI, again like the CIA, had not done its job, for whatever reasons. The troubles in the FBI were not just an organizational mindset but also the restrictions and the mandates that were put upon the Bureau. So individuals there were at fault, the mindset was at fault, but there were also restrictions put on the Bureau, and restrictions that were put on many people who were responsible for protecting us from terrorism. This was put on them by the political powers of the 1990s.

A case in point, Jamie Gorelick, who now passes judgment on the Bush administration as part of the 9-11 investigation. In the 1990s, Gorelick was a Clinton administration official who basically oversaw policies for our domestic terrorist law enforcement and intelligence operations.

□ 2310

In a memo she wrote, while a Clinton lawyer—in that memo it forbade any cooperation between intelligence organizations and law enforcement agencies. Now, get this. A lady now in the committee investigating 9/11 wrote a memo, and that policy was put in place that prevented the cooperation between our intelligence organizations and law enforcement at a time when there were numerous, numerous terrorist attacks going on throughout the world and even after the terrorists had tried to bring down the World Trade Center in 1993.

So right on the 9/11 investigating panel is an example of why we had 9/11. Her presence on the investigating panel represents a massive conflict of interest. This is well known, and she should be removed.

The panel is, again, demonstrating the same inflexibility and aversion to corrective action that it is now investigating. Gorelick's directives reflected a hindsight in the last administration, even in the middle of terrorism restricting our intelligence people, even in the middle of terrorism making sure cooperation could not happen. It was a hindsight reflected even by career high-level intelligence officials.

The Defense Intelligence Agency, for example, is supposed to provide the Pentagon with the detailed information necessary for it to deal with any and every potential threat. With all that is spent on the DIA, the Pentagon, like the rest of the United States Government, I mean, think about it, all this money we spend; but yet, we were caught off guard and the Pentagon was caught off guard and unprepared for 9/11.

The Pentagon's lack of information and analysis had disastrous effects. The counterattack strategy almost implemented after 9/11 would have been to send American military forces to Afghanistan from the southern part of Afghanistan. The goal for that plan was occupying a few major cities after sending in maybe 100,000, 150,000 American troops, but to capture a few cities like Jalalabad and Kabul, leaving the Taliban in charge of the countryside; and then we would negotiate with the Taliban and offer to withdraw our forces when they turned over bin Laden.

The Taliban would have us, thousands, tens of thousands of our troops, surrounded in a few cities in Afghanistan on the other side of the world; but the Taliban would be left in power even if they did not give us bin Laden, which of course they would never have given us bin Laden. That is as insane a policy as you can imagine, but that was a plan that was being seriously proposed. That would be the plan that would rely on our troops being supplied out of the bases on the western Pakistani frontier, which we now know is an anti-American stronghold.

Now, an alternative plan, based on cooperation with the battle-tested

troops of the Northern Alliance, took a long time to develop, because the Pentagon did not know who the players were, much less what the anti-Taliban forces in the north could do. So it almost had disastrous consequences, that we did not know exactly what the strength of the anti-Taliban forces was.

My staff ended up providing the Pentagon with the names and strength assessment and the satellite telephone numbers, cell phone numbers of significant Afghan leaders who opposed the Taliban. That the Pentagon was unprepared was no surprise to me, however.

In early 1999, a DIA, that is, Defense Intelligence Agency, analyst came to me for help. She was in the process of being fired, and her story tells us volumes of why 9/11 caught America off guard and ill-prepared. Julie Sirrs was one of a small number of Afghan analysts. She took her job seriously, as she should have. She in fact visited Afghanistan, but only in those areas controlled by the Taliban. After returning, she realized that this was a one-dimensional view of Afghanistan and there were gaping holes in the DOD's understanding of the situation.

She requested to officially go back to northern Afghanistan, especially to the areas controlled by anti-Taliban Commander Masood, and she was turned down. She was denied the permission to go there, but realizing the danger posed by this lack of information, Julie Sirrs took the initiative and took her vacation, paid her own way, organized her own trip to the Panjeer Valley, which was the bastion of Commander Masood, the last Afghan holdout who was resisting the Taliban.

I had met with Masood in one of his mountain strongholds 2 years before. I had dinner with him and strategized with him. He was a friend. He was a hero. He was courageous. But he was not perfect. There is no doubt. All Afghans have made mistakes over their many years of conflict, but he was a wonderful man and a person who would have done great things as a friend of the United States.

But what I did was somewhat risky, to go into the mountains and see him, but what Julie Sirrs did was far more dangerous. What Julie Sirrs did was heroic.

When she got to the Panjir Valley, she found her assumptions were right. Something vital to America's security was happening, something she was not really able to discover when she visited the Taliban-controlled areas before. Commander Masood told her that he was facing a new enemy in Afghanistan. Masood's militia was finding itself in fire fights with some kind of fundamentalist foreign legion. Apparently, bin Laden, who was making Afghanistan into his base of operations, was importing Islamic radicals from all over the world, training them as terrorists and killers and then sending them up against Masood's troops for combat experience.

Masood offered to let Julie or other Americans interrogate the foreign pris-

oners he had captured. This again was an intelligence bonanza, but a missed opportunity. Julie Sirrs was uncovering the creation and organization and training of bin Laden's terrorist army, al Qaeda. She only had a short time, but she collected enough information for a preliminary report, and she headed home.

The minute she got back, she found herself under severe restrictions at the Defense Intelligence Agency and restricted to whom she could brief or show any of her reports. So her report was kept close hold rather than distributed as it should have been, a report that indicated that a terrorist army was being formed in Afghanistan that could and was threatening the United States of America. The commanding officer of the DIA labeled her as insubordinate, he fired her; and when she fought her dismissal, he set out to destroy her.

Amidst the fight to save her job, the DIA commanding officer told her what really upset him most was her contact with Masood, who, according to the DIA general, was one of the bad guys. This general was sending his people to be briefed by the Taliban, but any contact with Masood was a cause for dismissal. This was a mind set during the Clinton administration. It was a mind set of the man who headed the Defense Intelligence Agency. Something is terribly wrong with this picture. The vitriol and the attack against Sirrs was shockingly harsh. Patently false charges were brought up against her to overwhelm her defense and intimidate her and force her to go quietly, which she did not do.

She was charged, for example, with lying, even though an agency lie detector test, which I have looked at, proved that she was telling the truth. She was charged with misusing equipment, having borrowed an office camera to take with her to Afghanistan. The charge was nonsense. Even her superiors agreed it was a reasonable thing to do; yet they pushed that as if she was stealing, even though she brought the camera back right after the trip with pictures so people would understand what was going on in Afghanistan.

The attacks on this sincere and responsible intelligence analyst were arrogant, nasty, malevolent, and loathsome. The brutal treatment of Sirrs sent a negative message to anyone and everyone in the DIA who had any idea of taking the initiative or thinking creatively. Julie came to me because she had no one else to whom she could turn. I was the one elected official with experience in Afghanistan. I requested a meeting with the general in charge of the DIA and right off the bat he insisted to me when he came to my office that she was insubordinate. I told him from my view she was a hero, risking her life and her job, spending her own money, all to get information that she believed was necessary for our country to be prepared in case something happened in Afghanistan.

After hearing each other out, I recommended to the general that we compromise. He could give her back her job, and she would end up neither a hero nor a scofflaw and I would back off and he could use political pressure from me as an excuse to bring her back. After the general left my office, he not only reaffirmed the firing of Julie Sirrs but he later stripped her of her security clearance as well, thus eliminating her ability to earn a living as an intelligence analyst. He demonstrated how he could destroy anyone who would deviate from his program or the mind-set of the day or defy his directives. Insubordination was the ultimate challenge to his authority; and in reaffirming his authority, he said it was more important to reaffirm that authority than was the security of the United States of America.

A few months later, the general retired. All of this would be a regrettable, but forgotten, incident, except for the resulting 9/11 tragedy, except for how terribly unprepared the Pentagon was for the war in Afghanistan. It is my sad duty tonight to inform my colleagues that the general to whom I am referring is Lieutenant General Patrick Hughes, who is today one of the top officials running the Department of Homeland Security. I am certain that over his long and distinguished career he made many contributions, but his indefensible conduct in the Sirrs case cast serious doubt over his judgment. I have notified Secretary Ridge on this side of General Hughes's character and recommended that he should not hold the high-level position that he holds in the Department of Homeland Security.

When George W. Bush took office in January 2000, the 9/11 terrorist operation, as I said, unbeknownst to any of us in government or in the outside, was already under way; but the threat posed by the radical anti-Western Islamic regime in Afghanistan was well known. An aggressive new policy to counteract this threat was needed. After Bush came in, we expected some changes. But having worked in the Reagan White House, I understood that it took time for a new President to appoint staff and set new policy and to begin to take control of government.

Nevertheless, during that brief interlude, and it was brief, between Bush's inauguration and 9/11, I met with the new national security staff on 3 occasions, including one meeting with Condoleezza Rice to discuss Afghanistan. There were, in fact, signs noted in an overview story in *The Washington Post* about a month ago that some steps were being made to break away from the previous administration's Afghanistan policy. And the previous administration's Afghan policy was a pro-Taliban policy, a policy of not supporting the opposition to the Taliban, even as Afghanistan became the base of operations for bin Laden, who was conducting terrorist activities against us.

One thing was certain to me at that time. George W. Bush, unlike his prede-

cessor, would have a bold and unmistakable response to bin Laden's terrorist attacks.

□ 2320

As I stated earlier, we know now that those who planned and financed the 9/11 attack did not believe the United States would act forcefully and as unrelentingly as we have. This calculation resulted from the tepid American response to earlier al Qaeda attacks from Africa to New York City. But here again was an example of a rotten policy where we let these terrorist attacks happen and did not retaliate with our full strength that led to 9/11.

And, yes, had we retaliated more aggressively, had we retaliated more aggressively when our embassies were blown up in Kenya and Tanzania, the terrorists we have captured now tell us had we done that, had we responded more aggressively, they would have had second thoughts about taking this plan to fly their planes into the buildings in New York, they would have had second thoughts and might have pulled back.

I took pride in those days as being one Member of Congress, and this was before 9/11, who maintained an interest in Afghanistan, which I saw even then as a major national security threat to our country. It was an American calamity waiting to happen.

Then just a few days before 9/11, the news came that Commander Masood had been murdered in Afghanistan. I felt as if I had lost a close friend. And as I mourned his loss, I struggled to fully understand the significance of his death. Then it dawned on me. It dawned on me why Masood had been assassinated. America was going to be attacked. It would be so monstrous that bin Laden's gang in Afghanistan wanted to cut us off from a means of counterattacking them in their base of operations in Afghanistan. We would have turned to Masood if we were attacked. That is what we would have done, and they were cutting us off from turning to Masood, but now Masood was dead.

Perhaps his death was a signal to set the planned attack on our country in motion. So on September 10, after I had figured that out a few days before 9/11, on September 10 I tried to alert anyone and everyone who would listen to me. I tried to give my warnings of an imminent terrorist attack. A few people listened as a courtesy, but for most people their eyes simply glazed over as I tried to warn them. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD) stood behind me in an elevator and overheard me lamenting that something horrible was about to happen and that I could not get anyone to take my warnings seriously. It was like being in the Twilight Zone, I said. And as I got off the elevator, he lightheartedly patted me on the back and with a smile told me not to be so melodramatic and certainly not to be so apocryphal.

Undeterred, I called the White House and asked for an emergency appoint-

ment with Condoleezza Rice in order to warn of an impending terrorist attack, a major attack. Her office apologized that she was incredibly busy that day but she respected my opinion and would see me the next day at 3:00 p.m. The next day was 9/11. The planes began flying into the buildings at 8:48 a.m.

I tell this story for one reason. We must ask how is it that one Member of Congress, with the help of one staff member, was able to analyze the situation and determine that the terrorists based in Afghanistan were about to launch a major terrorist attack on the United States when the CIA and others failed to do so? We spent billions of dollars on our intelligence apparatus. With one staff member, I was able to figure it out. Why were they not?

Yes, George Tenet should have resigned a long time ago, and he is certainly at the top of the list of those who should be held accountable for 9/11, for not thwarting the attack or not even warning us of the attack that was coming.

On 9/11 there was another incident that underscored this about the CIA. Shortly after the attack, I called King Zhir Shah in Rome. He was now America's greatest asset for any action that would be taken against the terrorist forces in Afghanistan. Masood was dead, but the Afghan people would rally behind the king. Well, if I could figure that out, that the king of Afghanistan exiled in Rome was our greatest asset in this war that we were in because thousands of our people had just been killed before our eyes, the Taliban certainly could have figured that out.

So I was shocked to find out that King Zhir Shah in his villa in Rome had no protection. He was totally vulnerable. So I told the king to stay put and went to work. Among others I called the CIA and managed to speak directly to one of Tenet's top lieutenants. I explained the situation, and he acknowledged the importance of the king, assuring me that he would take care of it.

A few hours later, I happened to talk to this gentleman again, and I will never forget the response, his response, when I asked if the king was under protection at that moment. This was 5 hours later. "You don't expect us to act that fast, do you?"

Just like the FBI, there was something wrong with the mindset at the CIA. Yes, we expect them—our people in the CIA—to act at a time when we have long-distance telephone calls and digital communication to act that fast at a time when thousands of Americans are losing their lives and we had no idea how many more would be losing their lives. And that mindset of "you did not expect us to act that fast," that blame must be placed on George Tenet. So his name is to be on that list and underlined.

By the way, late in the day on 9-11, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr.

GREENWOOD) came running up to me when he saw me and said, "How did you know? How did you know?" Well, the question is why did any of us not know? Why did we not know? Why did those whom we have hired to protect us not know?

It is time for those who made possible the rise of the Taliban, the rise of bin Laden, and, yes, the tragedy of 9-11 to be held personally accountable and for us to understand the policies and the people that caused 9-11. It was not something that was ordained by God to happen. It could have been stopped had we been responsible and had people done their job.

The list stretches over both Republican and Democratic administrations. Through the failures of the CIA under Ronald Reagan when the CIA fellow in Islamabad channeled our money to fanatics when there were other people fighting the communists, the Soviets, who would have been happy to get those supplies. We could have built their strength up. So from that failure to the blunders of the State Department under George Bush to the incompetence and disingenuous posturing of the diplomats under Bill Clinton, accountability requires that their names be given.

Retired General Patrick Hughes, who as head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, fired Julie Sirrs and today holds a high position in the Department of Homeland Security. He must accept responsibility for something he did that was just demonstrably wrong. Former ambassador and now Governor Bill Richardson, a man who was our ambassador to the United Nations, a good person, a good human being whom I personally like, he, under orders from who knows who, saved the Taliban from defeat when they were vulnerable. He personally did, along with Former Assistant Secretary of State Rick Inderfurth.

Had the Taliban been defeated as they were in a position of being defeated, 9-11 just would not have happened. There would not have been a staging area for bin Laden to operate out of, and, as I say, the former CIA Officer Milton Bearden, who armed the most fanatic of the Afghan forces who struggled against the Soviet occupation.

The former CIA Director George Tenet, whose culpability I have mentioned several times, he resigned. He should have done so long ago. Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, she was the point person for the policy of covert support for the Taliban, and she was the one who detailed the opportunity for us to receive information from Sudan that would have permitted us to eliminate bin Laden's terrorist network. Of course it was not the policy. She was doing something that was consistent with the policy of that administration.

□ 2330

Then, of course, Dick Clarke, who has criticized this President for the few

months he had in power before 9/11, was, along with a few others, in a high level position to argue against, if not to change, the grotesquely mistaken policies of the eighties and nineties, but he failed to do so. In fact, we know a few of the things that he did were exactly in the wrong direction.

If another 9/11 is to be avoided, we need accountability. We do not need the rearranging of a bureaucratic organizational chart. There is nothing wrong with our system that brought on 9/11, and there is nothing wrong with our system which will not be corrected by having different policies in place and different people in positions of authority.

Let us now, if nothing else, be honest with each other. We have Ms. Gorelick, who is on the panel investigating 9/11, when she herself issued mandates that undercut our ability to fight terrorism back in the 1990s. Let us be honest with each other. Let us have an honest accounting. We can start right there by relieving that person from her responsibilities and looking at that role that she played that undercut the ability of our departments and agencies to do their job.

So, let us be honest with one another, have an honest accounting, and then let us join together and let us commit ourselves to defeating this murderous enemy, this enemy that would destroy our way of life, who hates everything that America stands for, and let us defeat this enemy so completely that no one will ever again miscalculate about the power of the American people or the courage of the American people.

Today, we have a chance to make a better world for tomorrow. We saw where people and policies of a decade ago have left us in this turmoil and this bloodshed that we face today. But if we have courage, and our President has this courage, and he is unrelenting, and if we get behind him, and if the American people are unified in our commitment, this threat, just like the threat of Nazism and Japanese militarism in the 1940s and 1930s, we defeated that threat to mankind, and then we defeated the threat of communism.

But if we are honest with ourselves and we move forward, correcting our mistakes, and there will always be mistakes, there were mistakes in World War II, there were mistakes in the war against communism, but if we correct our mistakes and insist that people be held accountable, we will build a future for our children that is secure, and we will build a country that can live in peace and prosperity and in friendship with others.

More than that, we will live in friendship with all people, especially those moderate Muslims who do not share in the hatred and are appalled by the hatred of bin Laden towards the West. Let us build a world where Christians and Muslims can respect each other's faith. But we need to take the leadership. We cannot depend on the

Saudis or the Pakistanis or anyone else to provide the leadership. It is up to the people of the United States and our leaders here to lead the way, and I have every confidence that our President will do and is doing just that.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BECERRA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of personal reasons.

Ms. CARSON of Indiana (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. EMANUEL (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for June 18 and today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. FROST (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of illness in the family.

Mr. REYES (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and June 22 on account of a family health matter.

Mr. MCINNIS (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today and June 22 and 23 on account of attending a funeral.

Mr. PORTER (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of official business.

Mr. PUTNAM (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of official business.

Mr. TAUZIN (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today and the balance of the week on account of medical reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

The following Members (at the request of Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BLUMENAUER, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. SOLIS, for 5 minutes, today.

The following Members (at the request of Mr. JONES of North Carolina) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. GOODLATTE, for 5 minutes, June 22.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, June 22, 23, 24, and 25.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today and June 22.

Mrs. MUSGRAVE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GINGREY, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.